

Message Text

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UNCLAS STATE 235963 TOSEC 270616

FOLLOWING REPEAT LONDON 15071 ACTION SECSTATE IMMEDIATE

INFO LUSAKA DAR ES SALAAM NAIROBI PRETORIA MAPUTO GABORONE

23 SEP 76

QUOTE UNCLAS LONDON 15071

DEPARTMENT REPEAT TO SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UK, US, RH

SUBJECT: BRITISH PRESS ON KISSINGER MISSION

REFERENCE: LONDON 14959

1. FOLLOWING EXTRACT FROM SEPTEMBER 23 LONDON TELEGRAPH REFLECTS THE NEW, CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC TONE OF COVERAGE IN THE BRITISH DAILY PRESS OF THE SECRETARY'S AFRICAN TRIP. FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND'S STATEMENT SHOWS A MORE UPBEAT FOREIGN OFFICE REACTION THAN THE GLOOMINESS EARLIER REPORTED (REFTEL).

2. "MR. CROSLAND, FOREIGN SECRETARY, SAID YESTERDAY THAT THERE WAS 'A REALLY GOOD CHANCE' OF A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT, ADDING: "WE ARE NEARER A BREAKTHROUGH THAN EVER BEFORE." HIS TONE CONTRASTED WITH PESSIMISTIC OFFICIAL FOREIGN OFFICE COMMENT IN THE LAST FEW DAYS."

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3. DAVID SPANIER, AFTER REPORTING THAT BRITAIN WILL PLAY NO ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE WHATEVER IN SALISBURY IF A SETTLEMENT IS ACHIEVED, THEN WRITES, "THIS FIRM LINE HAS BEEN LAID DOWN IN ADVANCE OF DR. KISSINGER'S ARRIVAL IN LONDON TONIGHT, BEFORE ANYONE KNOWS, INDEED, IF HIS MISSION IS GOING TO PROVE SUCCESSFUL. BUT MINISTERS ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE REPORTS OF PROGRESS AND FEEL HOPEFUL THAT THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE MIGHT, AFTER ALL, JUST MANAGE TO DO THE TRICK."

4. AGAIN, IN THE TELEGRAPH, DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT VINCENT RYDER REPORTS MORE FULLY THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S COMMENTS ON SEPTEMBER 22.

5. "THERE IS 'A REALLY GOOD CHANCE' OF A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT, MR. CROSLAND, FOREIGN SECRETARY, SAID YESTERDAY. IT WAS THE FIRST OPTIMISTIC NOTE STRUCK BY THE GOVERNMENT SINCE DR. KISSINGER BEGAN HIS MISSION."

6. "PRAISING THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE--WHO ARRIVES IN LONDON TODAY--MR. CROSLAND SAID: 'THIS IS BY FAR THE BEST CHANCE WE HAVE EVER HAD. WE ARE NEARER A BREAK-THROUGH THAN EVER BEFORE. I THINK WE HAVE GOT FOR THE FIRST TIME A REALLY GOOD CHANCE OF ITS GOING THROUGH.'"

7. "HIS REMARKS IN A BBC INTERVIEW CAME BEFORE THE NEWS THAT THE RHODESIAN CABINET HAD REACHED A CONSENSUS ON DR. KISSINGER'S PROPOSALS. THEY WERE INSPIRED LESS MAINLY BY A SWITCH IN GOVERNMENT TACTICS." (SIC*)

8. "IT WISHED DR. KISSINGER WELL, GAVE HIM HELP, BUT REMAINED SKEPTICAL. THIS WAS REFLECTED IN A LONG, BROODY SILENCE BROKEN ON TUESDAY WHEN A FOREIGN OFFICE SPOKESMAN SAID: 'WE ARE NOT COUNTING OUR CHICKENS BEFORE THEY ARE HATCHED.'"

9. "THE OFFICIAL SWITCH FROM GLOOM TO OPTIMISM PUTS THE GOVERNMENT MORE IN LINE WITH DR. KISSINGER'S TACTICS. IT WAS BECOMING EVIDENT THAT SKEPTICISM IN WHITEHALL WAS GIVING THE HARDLINERS IN SALISBURY A CHANCE TO PLAY OFF UNCLASSIFIED

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THE AMERICANS AGAINST THE BRITISH AND TO CLAIM THAT EVEN LONDON DID NOT THINK MUCH OF DR. KISSINGER'S MISSION."

10. "HAVING TAKEN SO LONG TO SORT OUT ITS TACTICS, THE GOVERNMENT IS STILL FAR FROM HAVING A CUT-AND-DRIED NEGOTIATING POSITION ON THE DETAILS OF A SETTLEMENT, IF ONE STARTS TO TAKE SHAPE."

11. "THE BASIC STRATEGY IS TO AVOID AS FAR AS POSSIBLE
ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF RHODESIA DURING
A TRANSITION TO MAJORITY AFRICAN RULE. THE GOVERNMENT
WOULD NOT TAKE ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE-KEEPING FORCES,
THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM OR CIVIL ADMINISTRATION."

ARMSTRONG

UNQUOTE. ROBINSON

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